

## Introduction to the Christ-Hymn

- Today we are going to transitioning from the ‘Presence of God’ series
  - Asking the question that Donnie put forward last week;
    - ❖ So... what do we do about it? How do we live in God’s presence?
      - Live as temples of God >> God’s presence dwells in us (as H.S.)
      - We live with pronounced (counter-cultural) (heavenly) (kingdom) **humility**
- We are going to take a deep look at that scripture that Craig just read. [The Christ-Hymn]
  - ❖ (1) Fits well as a segue to the next series on Spiritual Growth
    - Spiritual growth really must start with **humility** & Obedience
  - ❖ (2) I did a study on it for NT Theology class
  - ❖ (3) A unique part of scripture we should all be more versed in
    - Brilliance in writing, culture, and theology!
  - ❖ (4) It is a powerful undermining our biggest enemy – **pride** (self-idolatry)
    - Pride the downfall of Satan, the poison of the fall ‘I will make myself like the Most High’
    - Not always as loud and prominent - Constantly creeping in to whatever we (I) do.
    - A mold (yeast) infecting how I think about and interact with others
    - The antidote? Recognize the work of Jesus
      - Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! **Rom 7:25** -- Amen

**PRAY** – pierce our pride -- Amen

- It is called the Christ-**Hymn**, because it read a bit like a song, or prose. (inset text)
  - Some scholars have said that it came from hymn being sung in the fledgling church
  - But there is quite a bit of evidence that makes this unlikely. Various literary reasons:

## Hymnos/Encomium (eulogy)

- Still feels like a poem, proverb, or perhaps a developing creed...
  - Unique, “unPauline” words and no mention of the resurrection (central part of Paul’s theology). In-fact some very unique words used in the likes of Greek myth and philosophy.
- Best explanation is Paul using known rhetorical styles and reinterpreting them for a Christocentric purpose. In my studying this, two influences stood out the brightest -
  - *Hymnos*: praises a god
  - *En-com-ium*: praises a human and achievements; used in emperor worship or eulogy

- Really seems that Paul brought together a mix of the culture's rhetoric and genre:
  - Rhetorical practices from the Hellenistic (Greek) schools
  - Elements of idolatry worship to cultural gods and humans
  - Usage of words drawn from philosophy and politics
  - All on the foundation of Paul's deep understanding of the Old Testament.
  - And he even uses a similar tool as Jesus did in his parables.
    - ❖ expectation of the story has a startling turn

## Background

- Acts 16 – Second missionary Journey [MAP]
  - First city Paul has evangelized to out of Palestine –
    - ❖ Diverted from Bithynia by the H.S. and called to Macedonia by a man in his dream
    - ❖ Establishes a sound church with healthy resources and devoted followers
- Roman City
  - Established with the name honoring Alexander the Great's father, Philip II (Philippi)
  - Conquered and reestablished as a Roman outpost in the time of Augustus, 167-8 BCE.
  - Later in 42 BCE, Mark Antony made Philippi a colony settled by Roman veterans.
  - The law was Latin, the vernacular was Greek, a blended culture.
  - The city was peppered with temples to gods least 14 temples
    - ❖ Ranging from the Egyptian's Isis and Horus to the Greek goddess Artemis.
    - ❖ Among them were the obligatory temples devoted to the imperial cult.
- Imperial Worship
  - define “the nature of the king and hence of the state itself” – King appointed by god
    - ❖ Post humous respect (Julius Caesar, Augustus & Tiberius)
    - ❖ Accepted as partial deity by (Caligula ... Nero) >>> Claudius in the middle
  - “The imperial cult was only superficially a religious-phenomenon”
  - It was more about homage to socio-political position than true worship of an emperor-deity.
    - ❖ Rituals and celebrations contained prose in common rhetoric patterns
    - ❖ Bread and circus (food and games) [Roman Poet - Decimus Junius Juvenalis]
      - Familiar?

## Purpose of Letter

- Paul is likely writing from house arrest in Rome.
- He is **encouraging** the Philippians through his imprisonment, (don't be discouraged by trials)
 

**Phil 1:7b** ... I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel (good news).

**Phil 1:12** I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel (good news), **13** so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.
- He is actually doing something even bigger. Laying the ideas that **transform thinking**

**Rom 12:2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...

  - He says something profoundly upending

**Phil 1:21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

  - A change in reality (The Matrix) - Solipsism. (Galileo) – Geocentrism. Electricity ...
    - ❖ Examples in psychology (Holocaust). Politics, governing and social behavior,
    - ❖ The resurrection!
- **Unity**

**Phil 1:27** ... that you are standing firm in **one** spirit, with **one** mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel

**Phil 2:1** So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **2** complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of **one** mind.
- **Humility** & obedience as the ethical anchor: (how should one act?)
  - Ask, does it honor God? -- Christ is the measure, the example. Christ is the **source**!
  - The catalyst to recognition of reality (in Christ) – encouragement, unity ... comes from

**Phil 2:3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in **humility** count others more significant than yourselves. **4** Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

### Summarize / Transition:

- Paul redefines honor from socio-political to the Christian honor of obedience and sacrifice.
  - Undermines the worldly 'reality' – Similar approach to slavery and honoring women.
- Maybe laying out material for new hymn, or emulating patterns useful for passing oral tradition
- Ears and eyes tuned to the hymns of the cultural honoring god and man, would have been confused by the reversal of expectations in Paul's letter to Philippi

**PRAY** – Let us have your ears Lord, Let us have your eyes (transform us) -- Amen.

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord

**EXEGESIS****First Strophe:** Form (Phil 2:4-7)

NET [CHRIST-HYMN]

- (*morphe*) Form: Plato and Aristotle as meaning ‘being/essence.’ – (*logos*) Word –
  - By the time of Paul softened: calls attention to the essential attribute of a person or thing
  - “very nature” of God (NIV). Similar ring as Col 1:15 “the very image of the invisible God”
- (*harpagmos*) grasping onto plunder, either in robbery or in exploitation
  - Perhaps Paul borrowed this term to counter the imagery of the Roman emperor conquering and plundering.
  - Jesus did not find his position (being in the form of God) as something to exploit, or use to plunder.
- (*kenosis*) Empty (neutralize) – emptying of deserved honor and glory – empty by addition
  - Paradox: taking on “the very nature” of a slave.
    - ❖ Looking like – Sharing in (humanity). Human *resemblance & condition* of Human
- Expectation of the story has a startling turn.
  - *hymnos*: honoring Jesus as God to *encomium*: Jesus as a human (slave even) – then...Phil 2:8
  - The audience would be expecting honorific statements of achievements of power and strength, **yet** the achievements of Christ is “obedience unto death, even the death of the cross” a horrific and most dishonored death.
  - Where there should be a verse positing a victory, heightening the social status of a general or the emperor, there lies the opposite.
    - ❖ This is the same tool as in Jesus’ parables.
    - ❖ (a twist that makes you question) Lk 15-16: 99 sheep, Lost coin, Son, Shrewd mngr...
  - The culture would have seen the lowly obedience as a position of a slave, the lest of the society and the death **not** of honor but of disgrace
  - But also a disgrace to Jews >> Deut 21:23 >> “under God’s curse”
- (pee·ay·taa) “The Piety” (dutiful or loyal) – Michelangelo (1499) -St. Peter’s Basilica- [PIETA]
  - ❖ So realistic, so accessible. Harken back to Luke 2:35 Simeon’s at the temple. Where he tells Mary that “a sword will pierce through [her] own soul also.”
  - ❖ Soak that up – there is Christ Kenosis (emptied)

**PRAY** – Your love for us Jesus – a power greater than anything else in the universe.

So, counter to our understanding. Shown in your obedience and humility, Shown in your efforts to reach us – to redeem us. To have relationship with us.

Your work - your sacrifice - your love, Jesus, is all for our salvation. -- Amen

*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!* (Rom 7:25)

Second Strophe: Lord ([Phil 2:9-11](#))

- Yet, it is the reverse of the world's expectations. Not humiliation, but exultation.
- Name above every name! (YHWH) Return to equality to God >> **Ex 3:14** (I am)
- (*kurios*) Lord, (the word chosen for YHWH in the Septuagint) >> echoing **Isa 45:22-25**
  - – to not speak the name of God, but differ it from earthly lord (adonai)
  - This literary move replaces earthly power with humble service as the highest virtue, communicating to the Philippian Christians: they are now of a culture much different from what they have known.

[Phil 2:12-18](#)

- Obedience because, God transforms your will and actions for good purpose
- Look to Christ as an example. – Be shining stars!
- Jesus' service to humanity through his obedience to God, represents ultimate true **lordship** and subsequent universal **glory**.

*We praise your name Jesus*

- The Christ-Hymn of humility is bracketed by these huge statements:
  - [Phil 1:21](#) For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
  - [Phil 2:12](#) work out your own salvation with fear and trembling
- Requires a transformation in how we think about reality
  - [Phil 3:7-11](#) But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9** and be found **in** him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—  
**10** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
- The reality we experience – is incomplete and has many false passages

**Practical**

- Kingdom Practical: The least will be the greatest
  - “The last will be first, and the first last” (**Matt 20:16**).
  - “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (**Matt 16:25**)
  - “[Jesus said], My power is made perfect in weakness” (**2 Cor 12:9a**).

- Earthly Practical: Transform the way we see reality.
  - As we move through the next series ‘Spiritual Growth’ keep this in mind
  - The necessary element is humility and obedience.
  - It is from the heart of Christ, that God will grow you toward true identity and purpose
    - ❖ A temple of the Kingdom on earth.

**2 Cor 4:6-7** For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

**7** But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

### **PRAY**

- Name above all names, honor above all honor.
- Took on humiliation (emptiness) so that your spirit might dwell in us – your temple.
- Honor be to you, Jesus; The very image of God – deserving Glory and Power and Praise, now and forever.